



Willmott, M., Langford, B., & Fletcher, A. (2016). Student and staff beliefs about smoking in further education settings: qualitative findings from a process evaluation. *Lancet*, 388(Suppl 2), [S111].
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(16\)32347-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(16)32347-9)

Peer reviewed version

License (if available):
CC BY-NC-ND

Link to published version (if available):
[10.1016/S0140-6736\(16\)32347-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(16)32347-9)

[Link to publication record in Explore Bristol Research](#)
PDF-document

This is the author accepted manuscript (AAM). The final published version (version of record) is available online via Lancet Publishing Group at <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140673616323479>. Please refer to any applicable terms of use of the publisher.

University of Bristol - Explore Bristol Research

General rights

This document is made available in accordance with publisher policies. Please cite only the published version using the reference above. Full terms of use are available:
<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/research-policy/pure/user-guides/ebr-terms/>

Smoke responsibly: Student and staff beliefs about smoking in further education settings. Qualitative findings from a process evaluation.

Micky Willmott, PhD. Senior Research Associate. The Centre for the Development and Evaluation of Complex Interventions for Public Health Improvement (DECIPHer), School of Social and Community Medicine. University of Bristol. (Early Career Researcher).

Beki Langford, PhD. Senior Research Associate. DECIPHer, School of Social and Community Medicine. University of Bristol. (Early Career Researcher).

Adam Fletcher, PhD. Reader. DECIPHer, School of Social Sciences. Cardiff University.

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Micky Willmott

School of Social and Community Medicine

University of Bristol

Canynghe Hall

39 Whatley Road

Bristol

BS8 2PS

Email: micky.willmott@bristol.ac.uk

Background

Preventing young people from taking up smoking is vital to maintain and accelerate recent declines in smoking rates. Most prevention efforts have focused on schools with almost no research conducted in Further Education (FE) settings, despite 44% of regular smokers indicating they started smoking aged between 16-19 years.

We present data collected during the process evaluation of a smoking prevention feasibility trial in FE settings. It aims to explore young people's beliefs and behaviour regarding smoking and smoking prevention in FE contexts.

Methods

Eleven student (n=69) and six staff (n=19) focus groups (FGs) were conducted in three FE institutions (two colleges, one school sixth form) in Wales between May and September 2015. FGs included between 2 and 13 participants selected using convenience sampling. FGs covered: views on student smoking behaviour; perceptions of the intervention; perceived impact on student and staff smoking behaviours. FGs were recorded, transcribed verbatim and analysed in NVivo 10. All transcripts were coded line by line using a framework developed and tested by MW and RL derived *a priori* from research questions and emergent indicative codes.

Findings

Students and staff expressed liberal, non-interventionist views about smoking. While smoking was recognised as harmful, it was seen as a personal choice which should not be infringed and students felt jaded by anti-smoking messages.

Students used smoking behaviours to signify successful transition to adulthood; not by appearing grown-up, but by demonstrating their understanding of appropriate, responsible smoking behaviour e.g. protecting minors from second-hand smoke, being considerate to non-smokers.

Staff commitment to fostering student autonomy conflicted with their perceived duty of care and institutional rules. For example, one institution banned smoking, causing tension between students and staff who tried to respect student autonomy while enforcing the rules.

Interpretation

Our findings highlight students' liminal identities and tensions that can manifest as FE staff and institutions attempt to safely accommodate and nurture young people's transition to adulthood. Smoking is denormalised among this population and students may be desensitised to smoking prevention messages in this setting. Interventions in FE must be sensitive to the transitions young people experience.

Word Count: 345 words

Funding Source

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Public Health Research Programme funded the feasibility trial (13/42/02). The work was undertaken with the support of The Centre for the Development and Evaluation of Complex Interventions for Public Health Improvement (DECIPHer), a UKCRC Public Health Research Centre of Excellence. Joint funding (MR/KO232331/1) from the British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research UK, Economic and Social Research Council, Medical Research Council, the Welsh Government and the Wellcome Trust, under the auspices of the UK Clinical Research Collaboration, is gratefully acknowledged.

Contribution of each author

AF conceived the study design, with input from RL, MW, RL and AF collected the data. MW and RL conducted the data analysis. All authors contributed to data interpretation. MW wrote the abstract with input from RL. All authors have seen and approved the final version of the abstract for publication.

Competing Interests

None of the authors has declared any competing interests.